Customs Act, 1962 which has been enancted in Finance Act, 1995 provides for imposition of interest @ 20% on the amount the payment of which is delayed by the importer. In addition, Section 142 (I) (C) (ii) has been introduced by Finance Act, 1995, enabling the officers of the Department to distrain any movable or immovable property belonging to the said importer and cause the said property to be sold and appropriate the sale proceeds towards the sums due to the Government.

Rubber and Coffee under OGL

412. SHRI RAMESH CHENNITHALA : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether Rubber and Coffee have been put under OGL in the new import policy;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether the Government have received any representation against it; and

(d) if so, the reaction of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH) : (a) to (d). Under the current Export and Import Policy, as amended, import of natural rubber continues to be restricted. However, import of the same is permitted against freely transferable Special Import Licences. Import of coffee roasted not decaffeinated and decaffeinated coffee in bulk packaging is freely permitted.

Some representations have been received inrespect of coffee and since review of Export and Import Policy is an ongoing process, changes, if any, in the Policy may be made as and when considered necessary in public interest.

Jute Cess Fund

413. SHRI SRIBALLAV PANIGRAHI : Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state :

(a) whether some cases of diversion of jute cess fund have come to the notice of the Government during the last two years;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the action taken by the Government against the persons responsible for this diversion of funds; and

(c) the amount of Jute Cess Fund collected during the last two years together with the details of heads under which it was spent?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI R.L. JALAPPA): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) The figures of total jute cess collections during the last two years are as under :

Year	Cess collected
1994-95	Rs. 1692 lakhs
1995-96	Rs. 1254 lakhs

The Jute Cess Fund is collected and credited to the Consolidated Fund of India. Every year, the Government releases funds to Jute Manufactures Development Council (JMDC) from out of the proceeds of Jute Cess Funds, so collected, which are utilised mainly towards Market Promotion activities. The JMDC utilises a part of the grant received towards Training and Development by allocating funds to the Institute of Jute Technology. The year-wise utilisation of grants towards Training and Marketing activities are as follows :

Year	Training Expenses	Promotional Expenses
1994-95	Rs. 30.00 lakhs	Rs. 1625.38 lakhs
1995-96	Rs. 33.75 lakhs	Rs. 2630.93 lakhs (including arrears)

Decline in Export

414. SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR GANGWAR :
SHRI A.C. JOSE :
SHRIMATI SUMITRA MAHAJAN :
DR. LAXMINARAYAN PANDEY :

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether there has been a sharp decline in export trade during the current financial year;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor indicating the volume and value alongwith the figures of export trade of major commodities/goods during 1994-95, 1995-96 and 1996-97;

(c) whether the Government have received any suggestions from various Export Promotion Councils to accelerate/export growth; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and the action taken by the Government thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH) : (a) No, Sir. As per latest data available from DGCI and S, exports during April-Sept., 1996 are valued at US $ 16.14 billion representing a growth of 9.9% over the level of exports valued at US $ 14.68 billion in April-Sept., 1995.

(b) India's total exports (DGCI and S data) for 1994-95 were valued at US $ 26.33 billion and for 1995-96 at US $ 31.83 billion.